

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:

In accordance with the environmental review guidelines of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled “Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act,” NMED - CPB has determined the following action is eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and may be excluded from further environmental review.

City of Las Vegas, New Mexico Wastewater Sludge Thickening Equipment Project

The City of Las Vegas owns and operates a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) that currently accepts and treats approximately 1.5 MGD with a capacity of 2.4 MGD. The City is authorized to discharge the treated effluent to the Gallinas River, Segment No. 20.6.4.220 of the Pecos River Basin under NPDES Permit No. NM00228827 effective on October 1, 2011. The City also utilizes treated effluent for reuse purposes under GDWP No. DP-1118.

The discharge is located adjacent to the WWTP at Latitude 35° 32’ 19” North and Longitude 105° 12’ 35 West.

The purpose of this project is to install new sludge thickening equipment inside an existing building located at the WWTP. The City is considering this project in an effort to reduce the amount of sludge that the City is currently hauling to their existing sludge injection site located approximately nine (9) miles north of the WWTP adjacent to the City Airport.

The City produces approximately 100,000 gallons per day of Waste Activated Sludge (WAS). The City at this time does not have the facilities or equipment necessary to store or haul the 100,000 gallons per day of WAS. With the new sludge handling facilities the City will be able to waste the 100,000 gallons per day and thicken the WAS from less than one percent to approximately four to five percent. The thickening of the sludge will greatly reduce the amount of sludge that needs to be hauled to less than 20,000 gallons per day.

Project Number: CWSRF016

Estimated Total Federal Share: \$840,000 (\$356,000 at 0% and \$484,000 grant)

Estimated Local Share: \$0.00

BACKGROUND

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The funding recipient has requested that the project be granted a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and excluded from the environmental review requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

FUNDING SPECIFICS

The funding recipient was selected to receive funding for a wastewater construction project through the SRF for the construction of new sludge thickening equipment. The funding recipient will use the federal funds along with local monies as needed to finance the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROJECT SPECIFICS

The following is a summary of the improvements:

1. The existing 23’ x 40’ metal building adjacent to the existing digesters will be utilized to house the new thickening equipment.
2. The new thickening equipment will accept the WAS sludge from the clarifiers.
3. The existing lime equipment in the existing building will be removed and the building cleaned.
4. The building will be modified for the new pipe penetrations, floor piping, and the foundation for the new equipment and platforms.
5. A new over-head bridge crane will be installed inside the building.
6. The existing over-head door will be replaced and made larger in order to place the new equipment.
7. The thickened sludge will be pumped through a new TWAS pump and piped to the existing digesters.
8. The existing digester aeration system and blowers for treatment of the thickened sludge and lower oxygen transfer efficiency will be reviewed.
9. The centrate from the dewatering equipment will be discharged by gravity to the existing supernatant drain line from the thickener back to the head of the plant.
10. The existing sludge pump and piping that is used to fill the sludge hauling truck will be modified to pump the thickened digested sludge from the digesters.

The activities will involve work on existing equipment located in a previously disturbed area, and will not involve new additional excavation, digging or surface disruptions. All repair work will be conducted in the public right-of-way or within servitude areas already controlled by the funding recipient. The project will not require additional land acquisition. There are no Environmental Justice concerns associated with the project.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

Categories of actions which individually, cumulatively over time, or in conjunction with other Federal, state, local or private actions that do not have a significant adverse effect on the quality of human health and the environment may be excluded from the environmental review requirements of NEPA. The proposed project is consistent with small scale, routine actions that are solely directed toward minor rehabilitation of existing facilities, functional replacement of equipment, and construction of new ancillary facilities adjacent or appurtenant to existing facilities.

Adequate documentation was provided to demonstrate that the proposed project will have no adverse direct, indirect, secondary, or cumulative effect on cultural resources, endangered and threatened species and their critical habitat, and other environmentally important resource areas such as floodplains, wetlands, prime farmlands, and aquifer recharge zones. The information was examined to identify potential extraordinary or exceptional circumstances which would invalidate or prevent the issuance of a CE under 40 CFR Part 6.204(a)(1). Since the project is exceedingly minor in nature, it has been determined that the issuance of the CE is appropriate for the proposed project.

APPROVAL

The request for a CE in order to implement the proposed project without additional delay is approved without the need for additional environmental review. This approval will be re-voked if, at any time, the project no longer meets the eligibility for a CE, new evidence determines that significant local or environmental issues exist, or that Federal, state, local or tribal laws are being or may be violated by implementation of the project. Since the project is expected to have a significant beneficial impact upon the citizens and the environmental resources of the area, the proposed construction project is considered to be an appropriate use of Federal funds.

Responsible Official

Jim Chiasson, P.E., Bureau Chief, Construction Programs Bureau

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Esteban Medina, Project Manager at 505-454-3832.